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Contact: Shelley Dawicki  
508-495-2378  
[shelley.dawicki@noaa.gov](mailto:shelley.dawicki@noaa.gov)

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### **Local High School Student Experiences Marine Science Firsthand at Woods Hole Science Aquarium**

They came from diverse educational and family backgrounds and from states across the nation, and for Keith Love of Hopkinton, Mass., one of the 11 high school and college students who spent the summer working or volunteering at the Woods Hole Science Aquarium (WHSA) in Falmouth, Mass., it was a summer to remember.

“I love being outdoors doing something active,” said Love, a senior at Hopkinton High School. This summer he had a chance not only to be active but to learn more about the marine environment through a five-week internship at the Woods Hole Science Aquarium in Falmouth, the oldest continuously operating research aquarium in the United States.

Feeding fish, training harbor seals, cleaning tanks, leading shore-side collecting trips for the public, and helping children and adults learn about marine animals at the touch tanks were all part of his daily routine. The WHSA offers two summer programs for high school students who have completed grade 10 or higher, a five-week internship and a two-week career seminar in late July. Both programs are run by the WHSA staff, and are projects of NOAA’s Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the neighboring private, nonprofit Marine Biological Laboratory.

Love participated in the five-week internship program June 30 through August 1. The annual program provides students with the opportunity to work with a professional staff caring for a collection of about 140 species of fish and invertebrates common to the continental shelf from Maine to North Carolina, two harbor seals, and sometimes sea turtles held for rehabilitation and eventual release. The interns learn about marine animal husbandry, aquarium operations, conservation, and public education. They are also trained to serve as assistant naturalists on public collecting walks to local harbors and estuaries.

He also participated in the two-week Careers in Marine Science Seminar July 21 to August 1, along with seven other high school students from California, Utah, New York and Massachusetts. The career seminar students get training in marine animal husbandry and basic aquarist chores, hear presentations from scientists working in a variety of marine fields,

go on collecting trips, visit other Woods Hole science institutions, and go on field trips to the New Bedford and Nantucket.

The seminar is designed to give students an idea of what people working in Woods Hole do and how different areas of science contribute to the larger effort to understand the marine world and to manage marine resources wisely.

Love not only learned about animal behavior and enrichment with the aquarium's popular resident harbor seals LuSeal and Bumper, he also prepared meals and cleaned tanks for the approximately 140 species of fish, mammals and invertebrates like lobsters and crabs at the aquarium. He and the other interns checked the water systems daily in the dozens of tanks, and learned what is involved in running a small marine research, education and conservation facility with 100,000 visitors a year.

But his favorite activities by far were collecting specimens in local waters for the tanks and being out in the field learning how the marine animals in the aquarium's collection relate to the real world. He also enjoyed just being in the village of Woods Hole, home to many of the world's leading marine researchers.

"I have always been interested in the outdoors, but this was my first real experience in marine biology," Love said. "The vastness of the knowledge in Woods Hole is amazing. It is such a small place but with such a massive focus of research on the marine environment. I've learned so much."

Wetlands and vernal pools are something Love finds interesting, so interesting that he wants to pursue a career in environmental studies. For the past three years he has been a member of the high school's Environmental Club and the student representative to the board of directors for the Vernal Pool Association, an environmental educational outreach organization.

His high school science courses in biology and chemistry, and in advanced placement environmental science this coming year, will help provide the classroom background he needs for a career in environmental science. But he has also had some practical experience. Last summer Love had a volunteer internship at the National Heritage & Endangered Species Program at the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife in Westboro. He spent his days wading through vernal pools looking for spotted salamanders, endangered freshwater mussels and other endangered species.

He says his mother has been a role model in his studies and attributes his love of the outdoors and wildlife, especially birds, to the passion she shows for the environment and instilled in him, and still shares with him. He enjoys all types of outdoor activities, from camping and hiking to biking and kayaking, that combine his interests in science, the environment and conservation with travel.

Once back at Hopkinton High School this fall, Love will be busy once again after school playing soccer for the high school team, of which he is captain, and traveling teams,

and with winter and spring track, which he started last year to strength himself following an injury and found he really enjoyed. He likes playing guitar, and is pursuing an interest in creative writing, especially poetry, developed during a school course last year.

“I feel most at home when I am doing fieldwork,” he said of the WHSA internship. “I have been able to apply concepts that I learned in terrestrial environments to the marine world. I like the beach, but I live for low tide, when I can explore the tide pools and see what is there.”

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